



British
Waterways
Dyfrffyrdd
Prydain

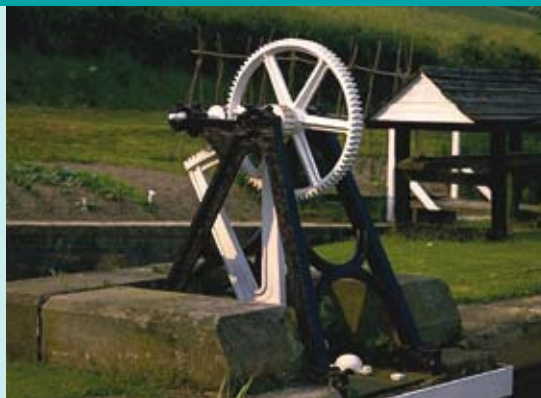
EXPLORERS TRAIL THE MONTGOMERY CANAL



Discover the
waterscape.com

WELCOME TO OUR WATERWAY PARADISE

Welcome to the hidden waterway gem we call the Montgomery Canal. We hope the leisurely walks contained within this booklet will unlock some of the many secrets within this serene and beautiful part of the borderlands between Wales and England.



The walks are not intended to be demanding: rather they are meant to appeal to a casual ramblers, the cycling family or individual on a weekend canoeing adventure.

There's no denying the obvious appeal of our waterway. Its elusive wildlife, tranquil towpaths and stunning scenery have the power to lure visitors back again and again.

But there's a hidden dimension to the Montgomery Canal. Away from the watercourse, down lanes and over bridges lie secluded hamlets, ruined industrial workings and stately homes and castles.

Our walks give you access to many of these attractions – bustling towns like Welshpool, overflowing with visual history, secluded villages such as Berriew, home to an idiosyncratic museum, plus magnificent structures like Powis Castle and Glansevern Gardens.

However you choose to access these treasures, the emphasis is on the leisurely approach with a mix and match approach to getting about. Call the Wales Traveline on 08706 082608 or visit their website www.traveline-cymru.org.uk to see

what's on offer by bus and rail as a stress free alternative to your car.

Whatever your chosen destination, we're certain you'll enjoy journey's end and the journey in equal measure. Hire a bike from Brooks Cycling in Welshpool (01938 553582) and head out among the rolling hills and meandering rivers.

Study our map detailing the best canoe launch sites on the sedate 10 miles of waterway now open between Burgedin and Berriew. Or just flip through the pages of this booklet to reveal half a dozen relaxed walks around centres from Llanymynech in the north to Berriew down south.

Under the partnership of Powys Canal Tourism, this scenic stretch is undergoing a controlled development, providing signage linking towns with attractions, restaurants with pubs and places to stay.

The creation of a new Explorer's Trail will appeal to canoeists, cyclists and walkers, gradually unlocking the hidden treasures in this secret waterway paradise.

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ROUTE 1: INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE AROUND LLANYMYNECH

THE WATERWAY AGE

Llanymynech was an important border settlement long before the Montgomery Canal extended its area as a commercial centre. The settlement was a strategic stronghold for warring tribal factions centuries before the birth of Christ - and its rich history awaits a personal discovery.



The waterway arrived in the 1790s, carving open this previously hidden landscape and turning it eastward and trade with England. Limestone rock blasted from local hills travelled this rippling highway to the dark industrial heartlands of The Potteries, furnishing the work and domestic needs of a booming population. South too, into the agricultural centres of Wales around Welshpool, where the raw limestone was kiln fired into soil enriching fertiliser.

THE WALK

Allow between 1.5 and 2 hours for this walk as it does contain some steep pathway sections. If you are driving, leave the car at the car park adjacent to the village post office. From there, head through the gate on to the Montgomery Canal towpath. Turn right. Follow the towpath under the bridge then make a right to leave this 18th century motorway and another right on to the adjacent lane.

Continue up the hill and be sure to look out for the lime kilns to your right which provided the waterway with so much of its traffic.

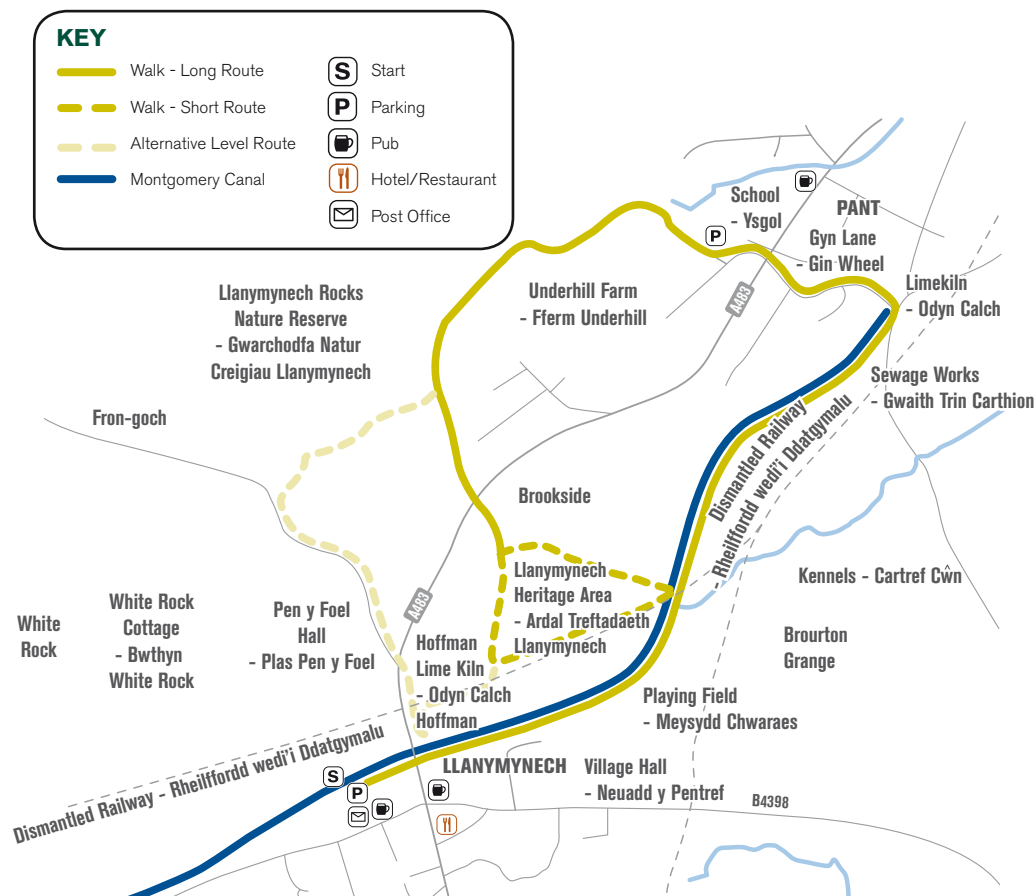
When you arrive at the main road, head right, then a worthwhile detour right into Gyn Lane, named for its restored gin wheel, a machine

designed to shift heavy weights and a shortened form of 'engine'. Turn back and head across the main road up Underhill Lane, which will eventually become a track.

Pass the car park and go through the gate, keeping an eye out for a familiar sight - another clutch of kilns - as the path swings gently to the left, then uphill toward the cliff, which housed the mother lode of sought after limestone.

Take the route along the base of the escarpment and look for the winding house to the left. It contained another gin mechanism, this one tasked with bringing limestone laden wagons down the inclined plane - a basic type of tramway. At this point, make a left downhill along the former tramline.

The route down becomes rather steep at this point - but you do have an alternative via the pathway to your right. If you do proceed straight down the hill, keep the houses on your right, all the way to the A483. Take care crossing this fast trunk road and head through the metal gates, then bear right at the junction. Immediately before the old stable block choose the left hand path. You will reach the Hoffman Kiln and its chimney via two more kilns.



The alternative via the pathway right takes you a more even footed route, joining Offa's Dyke National Trail at the signpost and proceeding directly ahead. After two 'kissing gates', you come on to a lane, with a cottage to your left.

When you reach the T-junction, make a left down the lane. Pen y Foel Hall is midway down on your right, before you once again cross the A483. Follow the route of the road until you see a left turn into the heritage area. Walk through the car park, then the gate on the right. Head left toward

the old stable block, choosing the right hand path past two lime kilns and the Hoffman Kiln and its chimney.

There is a kissing gate beyond the kilns which take you across a field. Look for the steps down to the Montgomery Canal. Cross the bridge and proceed back right along the canal towpath, under the bridge and into the car park via the gate on the left.

Distance: three miles.

ROUTE 2: BERRIEW - HIDDEN VILLAGE GEM WITH AN ARTISTIC SECRET

THE WATERWAY

Berriew is a charming village at the southern end of the 12 mile navigable stretch of the Montgomery Canal running from Arddleen in the north.



Begin at the car park by the aqueduct over the River Rhiw and head up the lane toward the village of Berriew. The extraordinary Andrew Logan Museum is on your left and is well worth a visit. Founder of the Alternative Miss World contest, Andrew Logan is a prolific producer of the bizarre and outrageous, an artistic mix of glitz and glamour.

At the bridge to your right, cross the river and take a left at the post office. Walk up the lane and make a right at Glan Yr Afon, a lane which is marked 'no through road'. Head along the lane and continue over the stile when it bends to the left. Walk up the field with the brook to your left and the hedge to your right.

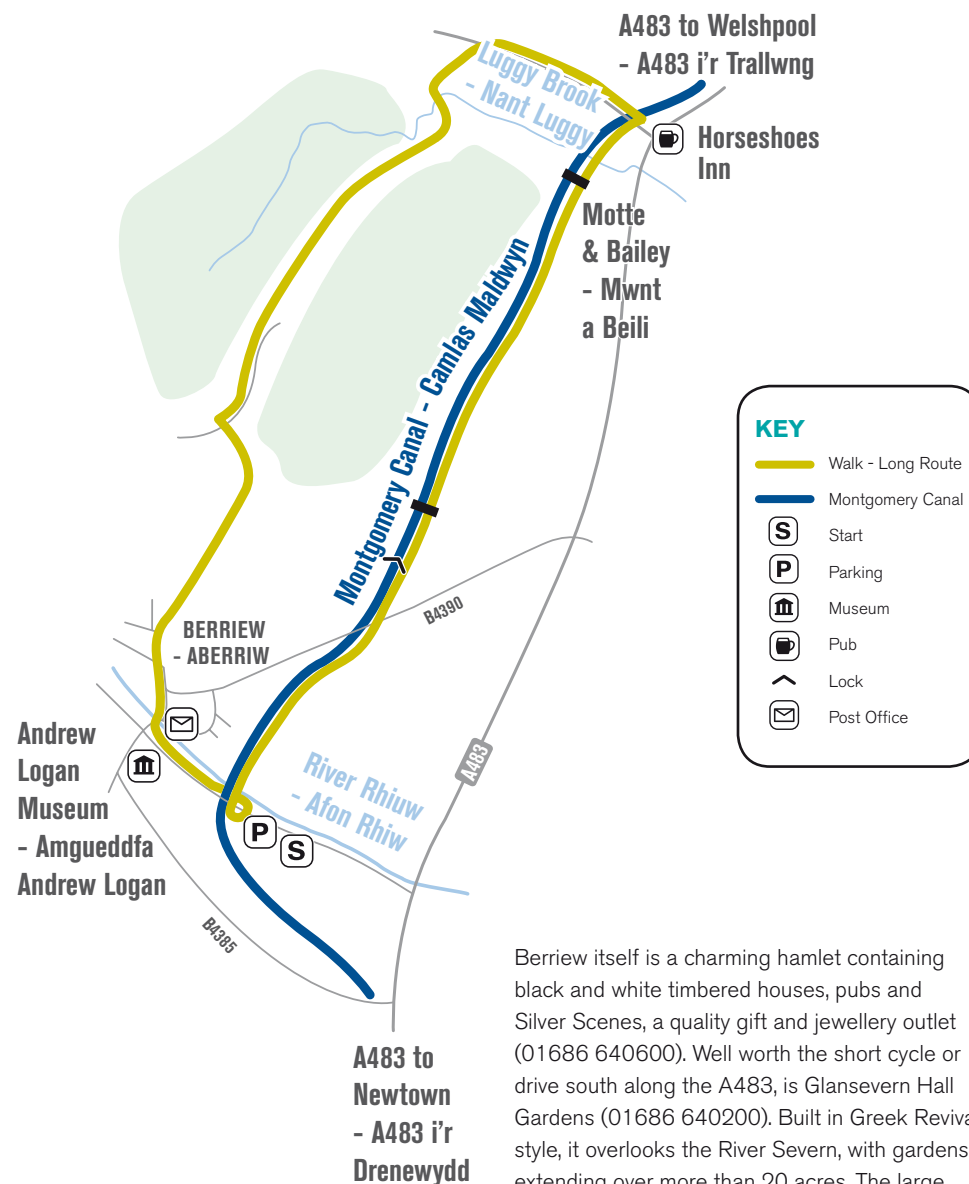
As the field opens out, skirt around the right hand side of the hill top. Where the fence lines join at the corner of the adjacent field, make for the first in a sequence of stiles. The second stile is immediately to your right, then make a left and follow the fence down toward the farm gate. Over this stile and turn right up the track to a farm gate - and another stile.

Walk ahead and through the gate into the next field, heading straight to the point where the next

field juts into this one. Climb the wooden fence and keep the hedge on your left. When it bears left, continue straight across the field into the next, keeping to the right of the steep slope and stream.

At the next boundary, continue downward with the fence on your right. Cross the next waymarked stile and make a left. Follow the stream's course to the bottom of the field and across the next stile. Over the bridge and on to the track, then turn left then right to access the larger track.

As this path ends, head right down the lane and over the canal bridge where a welcome respite awaits in the form of the Horseshoes Inn (01686 640282). Another manifestation of the canal's economic role appears in the form of lime kilns at the pub's rear garden. Pass through this garden and on to the towpath for a tranquil stroll along 'The Monty' back to Berriew. Two small aqueducts - crossing Luggy Brook, then the River Rhiw - afford an opportunity to look and linger. On the Rhiw's bed lie the remnants of the old ford crossing.



Berriew itself is a charming hamlet containing black and white timbered houses, pubs and Silver Scenes, a quality gift and jewellery outlet (01686 640600). Well worth the short cycle or drive south along the A483, is Glansevern Hall Gardens (01686 640200). Built in Greek Revival style, it overlooks the River Severn, with gardens extending over more than 20 acres. The large rock garden and grotto beneath are Victorian creations from the 1840s.

ROUTE 3: WILDLIFE ABOUNDS ON A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE RAMBLE

THE WATERWAY AGE

Now a haven to wildlife such as ducks, heron and a wide variety of fish, Montgomery Canal was once the most direct commercial route both north and south from the bustling town of Welshpool.



THE WALK

Allow between 2.5 and 3 hours for this walk back in time. Long stay parking is readily available in the town. Your walk begins at the gate accessing the Powys Estate. Take the pathway leading through the grounds. Depending on the time of year, try to catch sight of brooding Llyn Du lake down to your left.

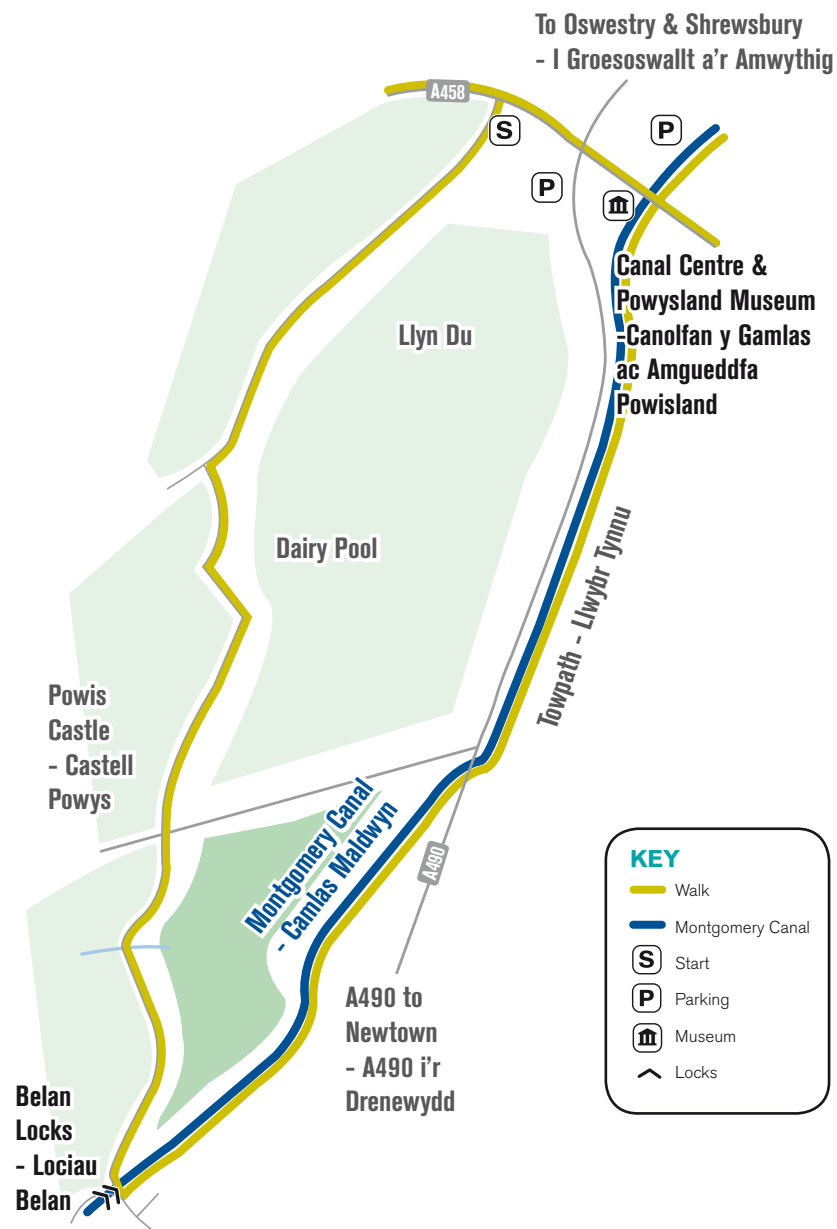
When the pathway forks make a left and take in the excellent vista presented from this route around the castle's front façade. Away to the east is imposing Long Mountain. At the estate's offices turn left towards a lane, which you cross and head through the waymarked gate.

Walk across the field, taking care to follow the initially indistinct track which heads downhill to the bridge. Cross over and follow the waymarked route straight ahead across another field. Over the style at the far end and it's straight ahead through a wooded area.

Exit the gate at the bottom of the pathway, crossing the bridge spanning Montgomery Canal and make a right on to the footpath. Immediately take a second right and you are heading back towards Welshpool, this time taking in the higher of the two Belan Locks. Again, evidence of the original purpose of the waterway lies just beyond the picnic area: lime kilns bear silent witness to the commerce which made this canal the motorway of its day.

Once back on the towpath, it's a straight walk into Welshpool. At the far end of Safeway's car park adjacent to the canal, is Powysland Museum. This locally focused living archive houses a permanent waterway display along with a 200 metre trail focusing on the technology and architecture of the canal.

Distance: just over four miles.



ROUTE 4: WATERWAY TO TAKE IN HIDDEN WELSHPOOL

THE WATERWAY

The Montgomery Canal still forms an important part of life in Welshpool. The town enjoys the benefit of a 12 mile watered stretch of beautiful canal, which is separated from the rest of the national canal network when the canal becomes dry at Arddleen.

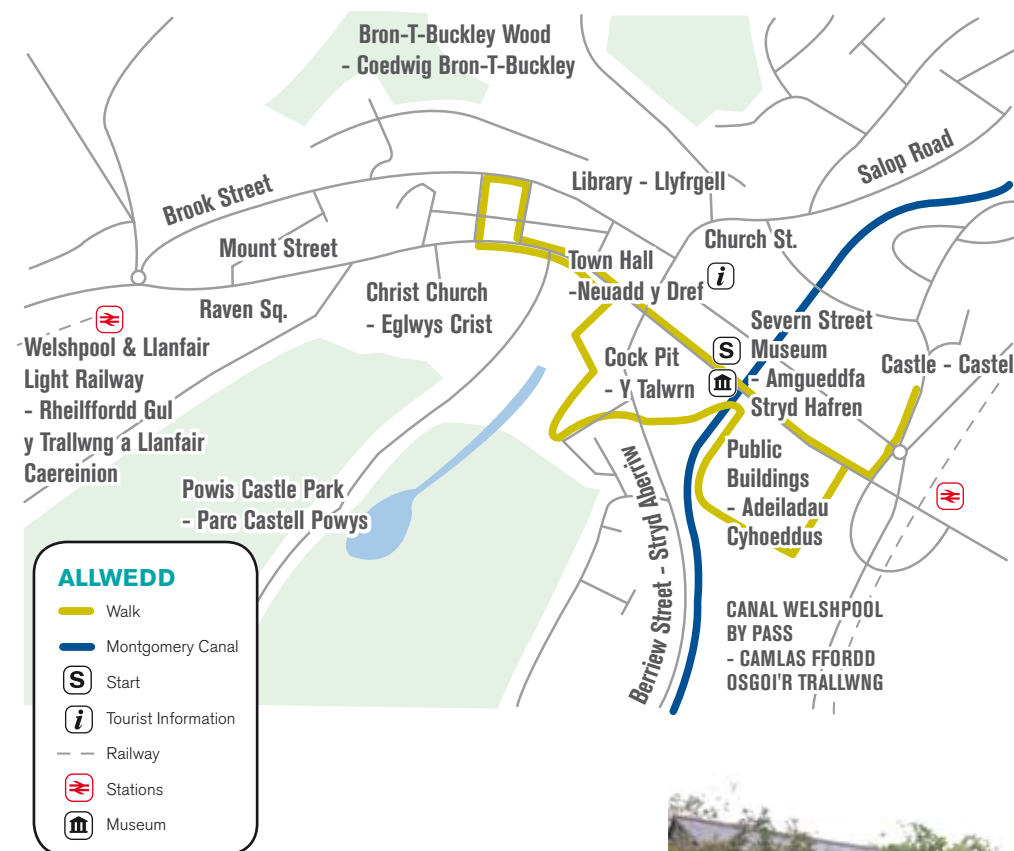


THE WALK

The compact and bustling town of Welshpool offers a wealth of hidden gems for the inquisitive visitor - churches, narrow passageways, a castle and railway station modelled on a French chateau. Allow 1.5 to two hours for this walk, which is around two miles in length. There is one fairly steep stretch leading up to Christ Church. Start at the tourist information centre, (01938 552043) whose helpful staff will assist you. Head from the centre toward the bottom right corner of the car park. Cross the Montgomery Canal and turn right down the steps, turning left along the towpath. Leave via the picnic area and proceed left along Severn Street until you reach the Gorsedd Stones. Across the roundabout sits the town's striking railway station. It was built in 1860 in French Renaissance style for the Cambrian Railway, using local red brick and stone dressings. The track between Oswestry and Welshpool opened that year, with a second new line linking the town with Shrewsbury soon afterwards. Continue from the stone circle along the line of the bypass toward Shrewsbury. Skirt the next roundabout toward Smithfield Road. Signs for Victoria Bowling Club indicate you are at the

remains of Domen Castle, a motte and bailey castle dating from the 12th century. Head back to the stone circle and look out for Howell Drive on the other side of Severn Street. Take this route past Victorian Maes-y-Dre School on your left and follow the pathway past a bowling green concealed behind fir trees. Turn right at the canal and use the second of the crossings, Town Lock. Immediately ahead is Powysland Museum and Montgomery Canal Centre (01938 554656). Return across Morrison's car park to Berriew Street and cross the road. Head right towards town, then first left up a lane containing a striking black and white 17th century cottage.

At the top of this lane, head through the gate and cross the car park. Before the exit, turn sharp left into Llyndu Terrace then right on to New Street. Set back on your right is The Cockpit, a unique structure in Wales dating from 1727. It staged cockfighting, which was outlawed in 1849. At the end of New Street, turn left into Broad Street, with the Town Hall across the road. This area contains some of the oldest buildings in town, with shops, narrow passages or 'shuts' on both sides of the road and the timber framed Mermaid Inn, a tavern for over 200 years.



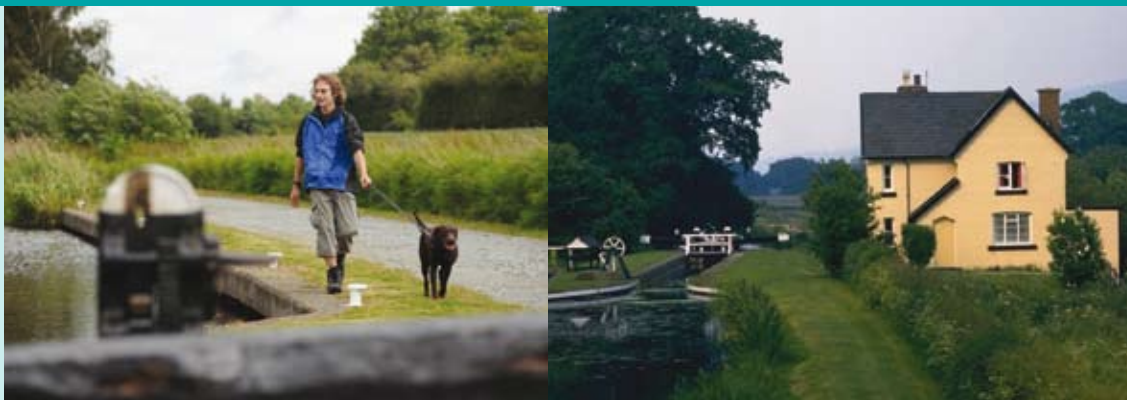
Passing the Methodist Church, turn left into Chelsea Lane. At Christ Church, pause to take in stunning views toward Long Mountain. Pass through the cemetery and down Raven Street. At the bottom of the hill is Raven Square and the terminus of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway (01938 810441). Head back toward town up Brook Street, with a disused quarry on your left, before turning right into Chapel Street. Turn left into High Street and follow it to the junction of Church Street. Turn left and cross the road into the car park housing the tourist information centre.



ROUTE 5: ARDDLEEN CIRCULAR

THE WATERWAY AGE

Burgedin Lock boasts a number of historically important listed buildings, while the locks were restored by the Shropshire Union Canal Society.



The Guilsfield Arm Branch leads to the terminus at Tyddyn Basin, which contained coal and lime wharves and a pub, the Navigation Inn. Now part nature reserve, the Guildsfield Arm offers fine views of Long Mountain and the green granite Breiddin Hills.

THE WALK

Park next to the canal near Upper House and take the towpath to British Waterways' offices at Burgedin Locks. Cross the Montgomery Canal and walk up the drive to the road, cross the road with care and join the Guilsfield Arm at the nature reserve.

Follow the towpath, through deep cutting until reaching the road at Varchoel Bridge. Cross the road and walk down the lane for a short distance until you see the stile on to the towpath on your right hand side.

Follow the path through the fields, along the disused canal.

On reaching the road at bridge, follow the lane for approx 150 metres continuing straight on through the gate when the lane bears to the left. (You can take a short-cut by following the lane and walking through the farmyard at Lower Varchoel and down the track to the lane at the malt house.)

Follow the path past the disused lime kilns, on reaching the end of the Guilsfield Arm, bear to the right and walk up the track to the road.

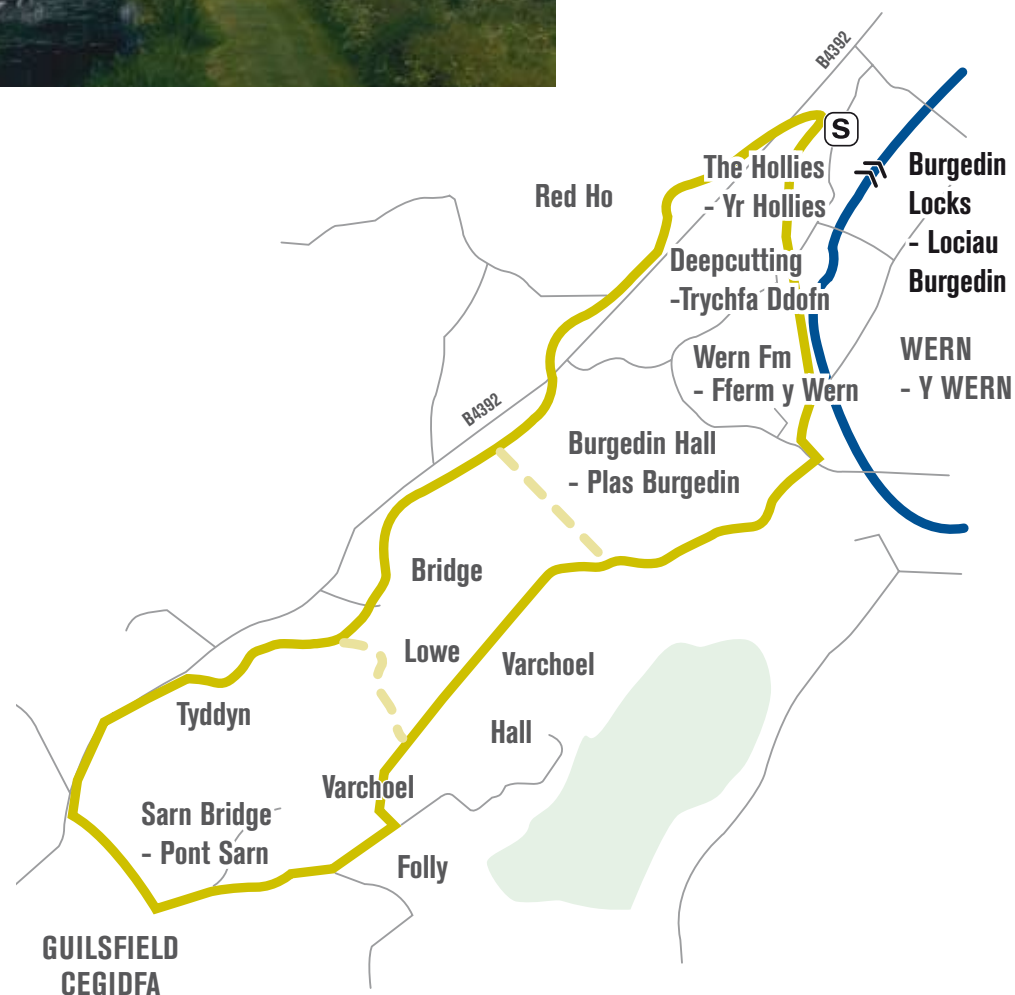
Turn right and follow the road into Guilsfield.

On coming into Guilsfield, take the footpath on your left that goes past the sewage works. Follow the footpath across the fields past Upper Varchoel and re-joining the lane at the malt house. Turn right at the lane, and then left at the T-junction.

After a few metres there is a footpath on the right, take this across the fields to the canal. Re-join the towpath, turning left back towards Burgedin.

KEY

- Walk
- - - Short Cut
- Montgomery Canal
- S Start
- ^ Locks



ROUTE 6: THE THREE IN ONE: MONTY, SEVERN & OFFA'S

THE WATERWAY ERA

The Montgomery Canal is a comparative latecomer behind the naturally occurring River Severn and the ingenious defensive line of Offa's Dyke. Yet its historic credentials are no less remarkable.



The sleepy hamlet was once a quay on the River Severn serving the burgeoning commercial centre of Welshpool. 100 ton boats would bring in coffee, spices and even church bells, with timber, lead and limestone being shipped south.

THE WALK

Park at Burgedin and walk under bridge 104 and follow towpath. On reaching the A483 main road, cross with caution and re-join the towpath.

Continue along the towpath until you reach the road again. Turn right and walk along the verge for 200yds until opposite the house. Cross the road with caution into driveway and re-join the canal.

Follow the towpath until reaching Clifton Bridge at Four Crosses. Then turn right before the bridge, walking out through a driveway and join the B4393. Follow Canal Road into Four Crosses, you will come out at the junction with the pub and the Spar shop.

Take care crossing the road and walk along the pavement until you reach the industrial estate. Here you join the Offa's Dyke national

trail, the trail starts by going through the yard of the milk depot. The trail is well signed with black acorn markers.

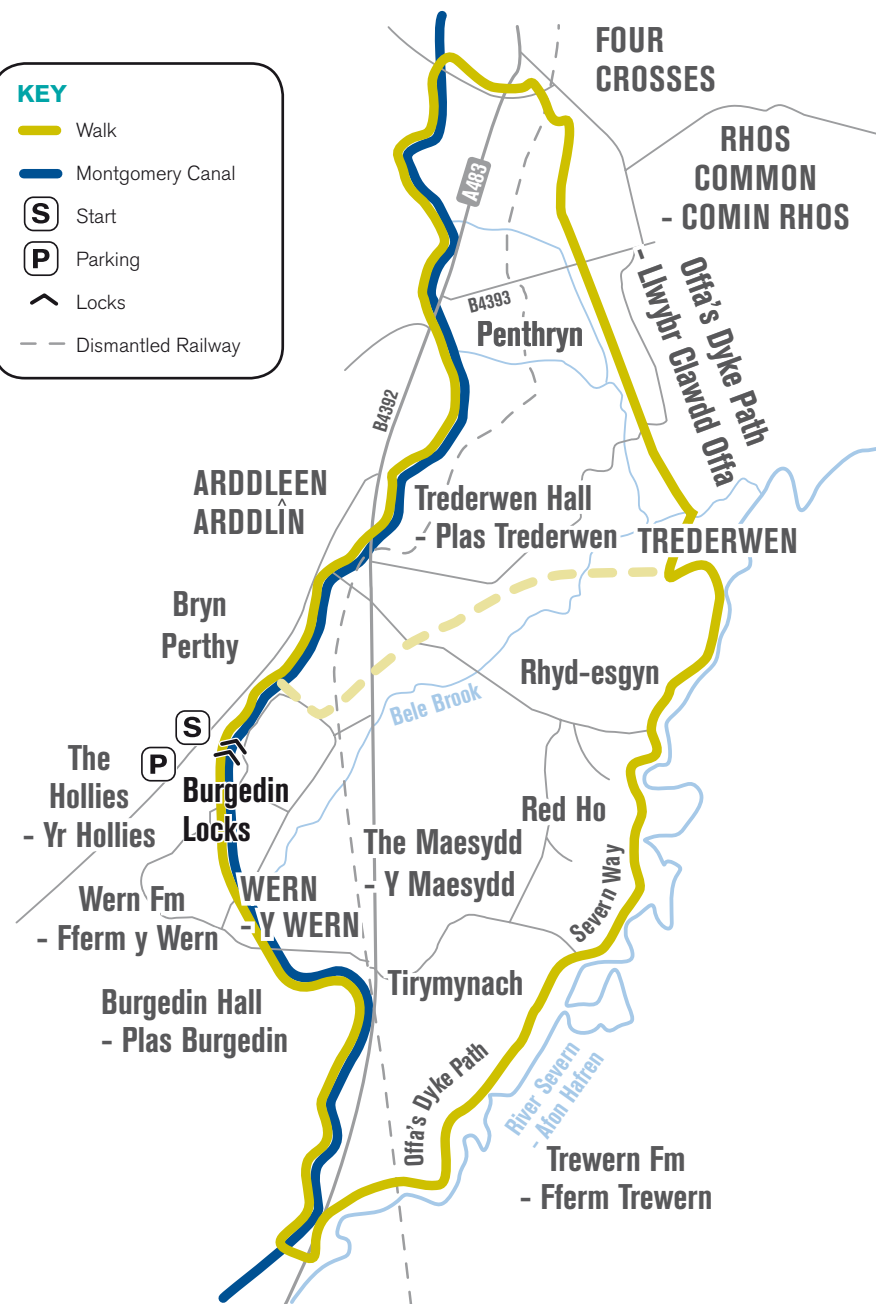
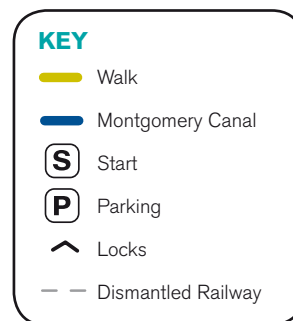
After approx three miles the Offa's dyke trail meets up with the Severn Way, for a long route continue on the Severn way, which follows the line of the river. If you prefer a shorter route take a right along the new footpath, just after crossing the bridge.

Follow the footpath across the fields, crossing the A483 until the footpath meets a lane. Turn right onto the lane and walk approx 0.5m back to the car.

If you are on the Severn Way continue following the line of the river and the Offa's dyke acorn way markers until you reach the main road, the A483.

Cross this busy main road with care. Turn left then follow the pavement for approx 150 metres. Turn right up a lane, and after 100m take a left to re-join the canal towpath.

Turn right onto the towpath and follow the way back to Burgedin locks and your car.



HISTORY & HERITAGE: FROM THE WATERWAYS ARCHIVES

The Montgomery Canal runs for 35 miles from Frankton Junction in Shropshire to Newtown in Powys. 11 miles lie in England, 24 miles in Wales.



The Montgomery Canal Company was formed following a meeting at Welshpool's Royal Oak tavern in October 1792.

The canal is unusual in its construction. It descends via its 12 northern locks from the Llangollen Canal, reaching a low point at Wern Nature Reserve before climbing along the Severn River valley via the 14 southerly locks to Newtown.

The first stretch of this waterway was built in 1796, linking Frankton with Llanymynech. However, the final southern stretch to Newtown was not completed until 1821, when the canal had demonstrated its profitability.

The entire section of the waterway in Wales is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its rare flora and fauna.

Testing for the revolutionary 'bouncing bomb' of World War Two took place along the straight stretch of waterway near Rednal. Balls were used rather than bombs.

The town of Montgomery - the likely origin of the canal's name - was founded by Norman knight Sir Roger de Montgomerie, who built a castle here shortly after the Battle of Hastings.

Deep within Breiddin Hills is the communications centre for Britain's submarine fleet.

A passenger boat service operated between Newtown and Rednal, connecting with the newly built Shrewsbury to Chester rail line. The journey took over five hours, allowing for the periodic change of horses.

Bridge 117 at Welshpool is called Gallowstree Bank Bridge. Convicted murderers were hanged nearby.

Pool Quay is home to the Powis Arms and Church of St John the Evangelist - both buildings being rich in local history.

Wern Nature Reserve began life as a clay pit, the material being used to line the canal bed. Brick production began here in 1824, with kilns and a tramway constructed.